

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

5 October 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: National Foreign Intelligence Board Principals

SUBJECT : NIE 4-1-78, Warsaw Pact Concepts and Capabilities
for Going to War in Europe: Implications for
NATO Warning of War [redacted]

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1. "Warning of War in Europe" is a topic of continuing interest and great importance to US and NATO defense planning. It is, therefore, appropriate to review our assessment periodically. The most authoritative existing Intelligence Community document on the subject is NIE 4-1-78, published in April 1978. For various reasons, it has been decided to begin work on revalidating it. I solicit your full cooperation in this extremely important analysis. The judgments of 4-1-78 will, of course, remain the accepted Community position until the forthcoming analysis is complete. [redacted]

2. [redacted] the National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces, will manage the project. [redacted]

[redacted]

for Richard Lehman
National Intelligence Officer
for Warning

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Going to War in Europe: Implications for NATO Warning
of War

As we start work on a revalidation of NIE 4-1-78, I solicit your full cooperation in this extremely important analysis. The judgments of 4-1-78 will, of course, remain the accepted Community position in the interim.

Richard Lehman
National Intelligence Officer
for Warning

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PROSPECTUS FOR NIE 4-1-80

Background

"Warning of War in Europe" is a topic of continuing interest and great importance to US and NATO defense planning. It is, therefore, appropriate to review our assessment periodically. The most authoritative existing Intelligence Community document on the subject is NIE 4-1-78, published in April 1978. For various reasons, it has been decided to begin work on a superceding study, NIE 4-1-80.

Comments on NIE 4-1-78

NIE 4-1-78 is entitled WARSAW PACT CONCEPTS AND CAPABILITIES FOR GOING TO WAR IN EUROPE: IMPLICATIONS FOR NATO WARNING OF WAR. The document is an assessment of how the Pact might prepare for war under different circumstances, and when US intelligence would issue a warning statement. The estimate does not address warning of attack or appraise Soviet intentions, nor does it include a detailed study of warning indicators.

NIE 4-1-78 estimates minimum times required for Soviet-Warsaw Pact armies to generate force via mobilization at a maximum rate against the Central Region of NATO: two fronts with 40 divisions in four days, three with 50-60 divisions in eight days, five with 90 divisions in fourteen. Since the estimate was published, the force generation rate has been challenged as being either too slow or too fast.

NIE 4-1-78 outlines the major objectives that Soviet military planners must accomplish before initiating war in Central Europe, namely:

-- Preparation of the nations and all forces for a theater war that could go nuclear anytime after hostilities start;

-- Superiority of force on the designated decisive front(s); and,

-- Readiness and security of all forces not directly contemplated for use in the European campaign in case of conflict elsewhere, in particular with China.

There are other factors the Soviet planners would accomplish if possible, namely:

-- Preclusion of timely NATO mobilization; and,
-- Execution of a comprehensive cover and deception effort aimed at both strategic and tactical surprise.

The NIE states that NATO detection capabilities would not be "significantly degraded" by enemy concealment and deception measures and contains the judgment that "...Soviet planners recognize that there is usually a tradeoff between force superiority and surprise...if forced to choose between them, they would likely opt for force superiority." Some contend that this treatment gives too short shrift to Soviet C,C&D capabilities and oversimplifies the tradeoffs which might be available between force superiority and surprise.

NIE 4-1-78 states that US intelligence could inform decisionmakers that the Soviet Union was moving to a state of full combat readiness within one day (two in the 14 day case) of the beginning of associated activities, i.e., within one day of the beginning of maximum rate mobilization. It has been argued that this judgment is not adequately backed by rigorous analysis. At the same time, it has been argued that this is a minimum warning time, and that in all probability there would be many indicators that would alert NATO before full combat readiness was ordered. Moreover, many readers have zeroed in on the short buildup attack option and have failed to appreciate thoroughly the discussion of a gradual buildup which appears later in the NIE.

New evidence on Soviet alert and mobilization procedures and on peacetime readiness postures has come to hand since NIE 4-1-78 was written. Furthermore, projected improvements in US collection capabilities and Pact readiness need to be analyzed.

Outline of the Project

The task is to build on NIE 4-1-78 as a foundation for NIE 4-1-80. It will be useful to reaffirm key judgments and, where required, to supply backup analysis including those events which, when detected, would support the intelligence judgment. Specifically:

1. The definition of warning, "an intelligence judgment clearly conveyed to national decision-makers that the Warsaw Pact is taking steps to enable it to go to war in the near future and that the course of events has increased the likelihood of war in Europe" -- which focuses on capabilities and ex-

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cludes speculation on Soviet intentions.

2. Soviet expectations that increased tensions -- "Period of Threat" -- will precede any major use of military forces.
3. Our judgment that attacks with limited force for limited objectives are unlikely, and our conviction that the Soviets would contemplate no campaign in Central Europe with objectives short of rapid defeat of all NATO forces afield.
4. Our judgment that all forces, not just those contemplated for use in the decisive front, would be made ready.
5. Our judgment that, consistent with the foregoing, the Soviets are unlikely to attack with less than three fronts, and would prefer five.

Analysis in support of NIE 4-1-80 will consist of four general tasks:

Task A will be to develop, in general terms, two limiting Soviet options for preparing to go to war in Europe. In the first, it will be assumed that Soviet planners opt for maximum force generation in minimum time at the expense of surprise. In the second, it will be assumed that Soviet planners believe they are under less pressure of time -- stemming from confidence that NATO is confused by the ambiguities of increased

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tensions or diversion in other theaters plus confidence in their own C&D -- and can achieve both force superiority and surprise by generating forces at a lower than maximum rate, reaching five fronts in about 30 days. In this case, when faced with a choice between speed and surprise, we will assume they choose the latter, but are still prepared to launch a preemptive attack should NATO begin to mobilize. These two options become the limiting cases. Task A efforts will be chaired by NIO/GPF with participation by CIA, DIA, NSA, and SWS.

Task B will be to build on the generalized options developed in Task A, taking into account new evidence received since NIE 4-1-78 was written. It will lay out the events and activities that will be required for the Pact to complete the preparations necessary to go to war and will be developed in sufficient detail to blueprint the accomplishment of Task C (following). Analysis will not be limited to preparations in the western USSR and Warsaw Pact, but must include the Sino-Soviet border, Northern and Pacific Fleets, and so forth. Task B analysis will be chaired by the SWS with participation by State, DIA, CIA, and NSA.

Task C will be a warning analysis involving intelligence analysts and collectors. They will examine the events and activities generated in Task B, and produce

a probabilistic estimate of intelligence indicators that would be provided to decisionmakers as Pact preparations unfold. This analysis will rely heavily on the recent work done by NSA in support of [] It will expand that purely SIGINT effort to a multidisciplinary one taking into account present and planned collection systems including SIGINT, PHOTINT and HUMINT.

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A sequence of sub-tasks will be undertaken for each of the two Attack options:

- a. Analyze probability and time of occurrence of specific events throughout the Warsaw Pact, including those not directly related to a campaign in central Europe.
- b. Determine collection capability, reporting timeliness, and expected information.
- c. Estimate what intelligence would be provided to decisionmakers up to the issuance of the first intelligence warning.

Task C will be chaired by DIA with participation by SWS, CIA, NSA, State and NITO/W. Participation by other collectors such as COMIREX and DDO will be invited.

Task D will be the drafting, coordination, and issuance of NIE 4-1-80 incorporating the results of Tasks A, B & C. The NIO/GPF will chair this effort.

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Finally, a tutorial on warning will be included. It will be designed to instruct the uninitiated reader in the difficulties of warning and its inherently imprecise nature.

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